

Do I need a Building Permit?

A Building Permit is **not** required for the following:

- One-story detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area do not exceed 120 square feet.
- Fences not over 6 feet high.
- Oil derricks.
- Movable cases, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches high.
- Retaining walls not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding flammable liquids.
- Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter does not exceed 2:1.
- Platforms, walks and driveways not more than 30 inches above grade and not over any basement or story below.
- Painting, papering and similar finish work.
- Temporary motion picture, television and theater sets and scenery.
- Window awnings supported by an exterior wall of a residence or utility structure when projecting not more than 54 inches.
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a residence in which the pool is entirely above the adjacent grade and if the pool capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons. A barrier **IS** required around the pool and a permit **IS** required for the barrier as well as for any plumbing or wiring which is newly installed to serve the pool).

Any building or repair work other than described on the above page needs to be permitted and inspected. If you still have questions, please check our frequently asked questions (FAQ), call us at 510-583-4140 or email the Building Division ([generic building division email address](#)) ([COULD WE ALSO LINK TO THE FAQ's](#))

Do I need a Plumbing Permit?

A Plumbing Permit is **not** required for the following:

- The repairing of leaks in drains, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that should any concealed trap, drain pipe, soil, waste or vent pipe become defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace them with new material, it shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be required and inspection made as provided in the adopted code.
- The clearing of stoppage or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, nor for the removal and reinstallation of sinks or water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of the valves, drain lines or fixtures.

Any plumbing work other than described above needs to be permitted and inspected. If you still have questions, please check our frequently asked questions (FAQ), call us at 410-583-4140 or email the Building Division. ([generic Building Division mailbox](#)). [Could we also link to the FAQ's](#)

Do I need a Electrical Permit?

An Electrical Permit is **not** required for the following:

- Portable motors or other portable appliances energized by means or a cord or cable having an attachment plug end to be connected to an approved receptacle when that cord or cable is permitted by the Electrical Code.
- Temporary decorative lighting.
- Repair or replacement of current-carrying parts of any switch, contractor or control device.
- Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles, but not the outlets.
- Repair or replacement of any over current device of the required capacity in the same location.
- Repair or replacement of electrodes or transformers of the size and capacity for signs or gas tube systems.
- Taping joints.
- Temporary wiring for experimental purposes in suitable experimental laboratories.

- The wiring for temporary theater, motion picture or television stage sets.
- Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating at less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.
- Low-energy power, control, and signal circuits of Class II and Class III as defined in the Electrical Code.
- A permit is not required for the installation, alteration or repair of electrical wiring, apparatus or equipment or the generation, transmission, distribution or metering of electrical energy or in the operation of signals transmission of intelligence by a public or private utility in the exercise of its function as a serving utility.

Any electrical work other than described above needs to be permitted and inspected. If you still have questions, please check our frequently asked questions (FAQ), call us at 410-583-4140 or email the Building Division. ([generic Building Division mailbox](#)). [Could we also link to the FAQ's](#)

Do I need a Mechanical Permit?

A Mechanical Permit is not required for the following:

- A portable heating appliance.
- Portable ventilating equipment.
- A portable cooling unit.
- A portable evaporative cooler.
- Replacement of any component part of an appliance that does not alter its original approval and complies with other applicable requirements of the technical codes.
- Refrigerating equipment that is part of the equipment for which a permit has been issued pursuant to the requirements of the mechanical codes.

Any mechanical work other than described above needs to be permitted and inspected. If you still have questions, please check our frequently asked questions (FAQ), call us at 410-583-4140 or email the Building Division. ([generic Building Division mailbox](#)). [Could we also link to the FAQ's](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

The following are some common situations that homeowners often face before starting work on their home improvement projects:

1. **"I want to replace the front door or other exterior door of my house. Do I need a permit?"**

Yes. The building code devotes six full pages to doors. The front door on your house is your primary exit in case of fire. The code requires that the locks on all of your exterior doors are of a kind that allow you to escape the house in a panic situation without needing a "key or any special knowledge or effort". During the middle of the night with the house on fire is no time to be looking through your pants pockets for your key!

2. **"Is a permit required to replace the door in the hall closet?"**

No. There are no code sections regulating safety features of your hall closet doors. The building inspector would have nothing to tell you about that installation. You therefore have no reason to secure a permit.

3. **"Is a permit required to replace the windows in my house?"**

Yes. The windows in your bedrooms are your fire escape in the event that your house is on fire and you cannot reach your front door. They are also sometimes a firefighter's way in to pull you to safety. There are specific code requirements regarding the size of the opening and locking mechanisms. There are also requirements for natural light and ventilation that must be met.

4. **"My child just threw a ball through the window. Do I need a permit to replace the glass?"**

No. The safety issues described above are not affected by the replacement of a pane of glass.

5. **"I want to reroof my house. Permit?"**

Yes. There are code requirements for roofing. In the Town of Paradise, the general rule is that only Class A fire rated roofing materials may be used. By the way, if your roofing material should fail before the warranty expires and the roof was not installed according to code and manufacturer's specs, the manufacturer may not accept full responsibility for the failure.

6. **"I want to paint my house. Do I need a permit?"**

Nope. Have a good time!

7. **"I am going to extend an electrical circuit and add electrical outlets. Permit?"**

Yes. Proper wire size and types, proper connections and wiring methods are critical to your fire and electrocution protection. We recommend you employ a licensed professional for this work if you are not certain of your abilities in this field.

8. **"I need to replace a loose electrical plug receptacle."**

No permit is required. None of the wiring issues above are affected by this.

9. **"My drains are all plugged. Do I need a permit to have them 'rootered' out?"**

No. A permit is not required (Sorry to hear about your pipes, though.)

10. **"I am going to install, replace or extend a gas pipe. Permit?"**

You bet! It is very important to your safety that your gas pipes do not leak and are installed to prevent developing future leaks. Additionally, the sizes of your gas piping plays a very important part in the efficient operation of your gas appliances and will be checked when you apply for your permit.

11. **"I am going to add or replace a heater/air conditioner or water heater."**

Please get a permit. There are important electrical, gas piping, pressure relief and seismic issues that must be addressed in the installation of heaters, air conditioners, and water heaters.

12. **"My repairman says I need to replace the exhaust fan in my bathroom ceiling heating unit. Do I need a permit?"**

No. You are replacing a component of an existing approved system. No permit is required.

13. **Who May Apply For A Building Permit?**

Property owners, licensed contractors or authorized agents may apply for a building permit. Contractors must provide a Certificate of Workers Compensation Insurance. Property owners doing their own work will be required to sign the Town of Paradise Owner-Builder Verification stating that they are actually doing their own work and are exempt from the requirement of having Workers Compensation Insurance, or they will be required to provide a certificate of insurance.